

THE COMING OF THE AFRICANS

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The first recorded protest in Brazil against slavery as an institution was that of the Jesuit Manoel de Nobrega, who, shortly after Bahia was founded, sent a letter to the superior of his order in Lisbon protesting against the importation of Africans into the new settlement.

In 1758 Manoel Ribeiro da Rocha, who had been educated at Coimbra, published in Lisbon a book entitled *Etiópia resgatado, empenhado, sustentado, corrigido, instruído e libertado*, in which the abolition of the slave trade was advocated. Sixty-five years later, in 1823, José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva unsuccessfully proposed in parliament a measure designed to end importation by 1828. But on November 7, 1831, the regent, Padre Diogo Antonio Feijó, signed a resolution drawn up by Costa Carvalho, Lima e Sousa, and Basílio Muniz, which declared free all Africans subsequently brought into Brazil.

Manumission existed from the first. Apparently early in the colonial period it became customary for masters to accept remuneration for original cost.⁴¹ Public opinion demanded that an owner set at liberty any slave requesting his freedom and offering the price of his purchase.⁴² The requirement was later made legally binding and enforced by law.⁴³ Other slaves were given their freedom either during their master's lifetime or upon his death. The fathers of illegitimate offspring often freed their children at the baptismal font. From 1864 to 1870 large numbers of slaves were granted their freedom on agreeing to serve in the Para-

⁴¹ The wearing of shoes or slippers became a symbol of freedom.

⁴² R. Walsh, *Notices of Brazil* (2 vols.; London, 1830), II, 391.

⁴³ National Law No. 1049, September 18, 1871. See Manoel Joaquim do Nascimento e Silva, *Synopsis da legislação brasileira* (Rio, 1874), p. 460.

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guayan war.⁴⁴ The law eventually provided that Negro women, after rearing ten children, should be automatically liberated.⁴⁵ In 1871 the so-called "law of Rio Branco" freed offspring of slaves born subsequent to its adoption⁴⁶ and set up a fund for the purchase and liberation of Negroes by the government. By 1880 a widespread emancipation movement was under way.⁴⁷ Thousands were freed by will, by payments from emancipation funds,⁴⁸ or by outright gift.⁴⁹ For instance, in 1883, in the towns of Baturite, Aca-

⁴⁴ On March 30, 1867, the monastery of São Bento in Bahia, which had already freed eleven slaves for service in the war with Paraguay, liberated six more Negroes and "presented them to the Governor for the same purpose."

⁴⁵ Koster, however, wrote from Pernambuco in the early nineteenth century: "A slave who has brought into the world, and has reared ten children, ought to be free, for so the law ordains. But this regulation is generally evaded" (*op. cit.*, I, 195).

⁴⁶ This law was, however, in some cases ineffective. Sixteen years after its passage the Bahian *Diário Oficial*, of June 4, 1887, reported the following auction of slave property at the *fazenda Concordia*: "Alberto, 10 years of age, one conto of reis; Vicente, 13 years, one conto of reis; Felix, 14 years, 800 milreis; Flauzinha, 13 years, 600 milreis, Simplicio, 14 years, one conto of reis" (Fonseca, *op. cit.*, p. 587 n.).

⁴⁷ Among the prominent abolitionists mentioned by Anselmo da Fonseca were: José do Patrocínio, Joaquim Nabuco ("the great and illustrious head of the abolition movement"), Senator Dantas, Ferreira de Menezes, Andre Rebouças, Quintino Bocayuva, Joaquim Serra, Ennes de Souza, Getulio das Neves, Nicolau Moreira, José Mariano, Celso Junior, Senator Jaguaripe, Luiz de Andrade, João Clapp, Beaurepaire Rohan, Aristides Spinola, Ruy Barbosa, Escragnole Taunay, Franco de Sá, Antonio Pinto, Leopoldo Bulhões, and "a writer using the pseudonym of Clarkson" (*ibid.*, p. 23).

⁴⁸ These funds were sponsored by emancipation societies, private individuals, and municipal, state, and national treasuries.

⁴⁹ The *Provinciano*, a newspaper of Parahyba do Sul, listed in 1884, among others, the following emancipations: "Dona Anna S. José, 16 slaves liberated and a farm given them for their use; Condessa do Rio Novo, 200 slaves

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ers; some of them accumulated considerable sums of money. Occasionally, as we have noted, they owned slaves¹⁰⁰ or invested their savings in the slave trade, sending money, arms, and trade goods to some convenient individual in Africa to "get up raids in their old homes or amongst neighboring tribes."¹⁰¹ In Minas Geraes free black laborers came to own mines like Encardideira and Palacio Velho.¹⁰² In Bahia they maintained their own regiment,¹⁰³ fraternal orders, and religious brotherhoods, each limited in membership exclusively to Negroes of pure African descent.¹⁰⁴ Many made sustained efforts to educate their children, and a few even had sons in the priesthood who, since the bishops of Brazil did not confer them, took their orders in São Thomé.¹⁰⁵

But the free Negro, in competition with the European

¹⁰⁰ Walah, a visitor to Brazil in the early nineteenth century, writes: "Next came an old free Negro woman, with a young slave of her own sex and color carrying her bundle. . . . Her young slave was her only property, and she made a good livelihood by hiring her out as a beast of burden, to whoever wanted her, and for whatever purpose" (*op. cit.*, II, 18).

¹⁰¹ Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹⁰² Gilberto Freyre, *Sobrados e mucambos* (São Paulo, 1936), p. 73.

¹⁰³ "There are two of these regiments for the province of Pernambuco . . . distinguished from each other by the names Old Henriques and New Henriques. . . . I have seen some portion of one of these regiments, in Recife. . . . They were dressed in white cloth uniforms, turned up with scarlet: and they looked very soldier-like. They were in tolerable discipline. . . . They acted with an appearance of zeal and the desire of excelling. Those of which I speak formed a finer body of men than any other soldiers which I had an opportunity of seeing in that country. . . . These men receive no pay, so that their neat appearance on such occasions bespeaks a certain degree of wealth among them" (Koster, *op. cit.*, II, 182-83).

¹⁰⁴ See, in this connection, *Compromisso da Irmandade do Senhor Bom Jesus das Necessidades e Redempção* (Bahia, 1929); Joventino Silvino da Costa, *Relatório da Sociedade Protectora dos Desvalidos, 1832-1932* (Bahia, 1934).

¹⁰⁵ Affonso de E. Taunay, *Na Bahia de João VI* (Bahia, 1918), p. 173.

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mulatto rose in class, he came to occupy something analogous to a middle position distinct from either that of the dominant European or that of the subject African. In the colonial period, "to appease the repugnance felt by whites at being put on the same level with mulattoes,"¹⁴ the latter were segregated for military duty. Thus separate battalions were organized at Bahia and elsewhere for whites, for *pardos*,¹⁵ and for *pretos*.¹⁶ Similarly, separate church organizations arose for *pardos* (Palma, Guadalupe, Boqueirão) as well as for *pretos*.¹⁷

In the Brazilian rural society of the colonial period Oliveira Vianna identifies three distinct social strata: the predominantly white *senhores* of the upper rank, the predominantly mixed-blood free artisans, *rendeiros*, and petty

and women of the Brazilian aristocracy who were blessed with small feet. The difficulties of the blacks, even when serving as pages, to adjust themselves to this new European and aristocratic style so ill adapted to their large and flat feet, can be easily understood. The mulattoes, on the other hand, who possessed smaller feet, well formed according to the European standard, could adapt themselves more readily to a practice which Handelmann observed constituted in nineteenth-century Brazil one of the marks of class distinction" (Freyre, *Sobrados e mucambos*, pp. 329-30).

¹⁴ Vianna, *op. cit.*, p. 164; see also his *Populações meridionais do Brasil* (3d ed.; São Paulo, 1933), p. 140.

¹⁵ In Bahia, the Regimento dos Pardos. See Luiz dos Santos Vilhena, *Cartas*, edited and annotated by Bras do Amaral (3 vols.; Bahia, 1922), pp. 253-54.

¹⁶ In Bahia, as elsewhere, Os Henriques.

¹⁷ In Bahia, Rosario de João Pereira, Barroquinha, Corpo Santo, Rosario "at the foot of the Pelourinho." Cf. also: "The cemetery for Africans was located next to the Misericórdia Cemetery, as one can see from the map made of the city of Salvador and its suburbs by Carlos Augusto Weyll" (J. B. von Spix and C. F. P. von Martius, *Abrevis da Bahia* [excerpts from the larger work, *Reise in Brasilien* (3 vols.; München, 1833-31)], trans. Pirajá da Silva and Paulo Wolf [3d ed.; São Paulo, 1938], pp. 141-42 [translators' note]).

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included: *carregadores*, laundresses, masons, stevedores, truck helpers, *car-oceiros*, unskilled laborers, domestic servants, and candy-peddlers; those found to be composed perhaps two-thirds or more of blacks (in addition to the foregoing): cobblers, street venders, newsboys, and shoe-shiners; and those composed half or more of blacks (in addition to the above): streetcar motormen.

TABLE 10
 RACIAL DISTRIBUTION IN THOSE EMPLOYMENTS
 AT BAHIA IN WHICH MULATTOES APPEAR TO
 BE PREDOMINANT OVER WHITES, 1936

EMPLOYMENT	SAMPLE	PERCENTAGE			
		Mu- latto	White	Black	Total
Army officers:					
Superior*	33	57.6†	42.4	0.0	100
Inferior...	38	47.4	34.3	15.8	100‡
Clerks.....	350	55.1§	44.6	0.3	100

* The range was from lieutenant upward.

† There were only two dark mulattoes.

‡ *Cafuzo*, 2.6 per cent.

§ These mixed-bloods were predominantly light.

The occupational groups which appeared to consist half or more of mixed-bloods, included: clerks, barbers, band musicians, army officers (superior), police, firemen, streetcar conductors, streetcar *fiscals*, taxi- and bus-drivers, bus *cobradores*, and street-sweepers. Approximately two-thirds of the band musicians appeared to be mulattoes, and about three-fourths of the barbers.

Among those occupational groups which are composed probably three-fourths or more of whites were found priests,

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Celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Carlos Gomes, famed Brazilian composer of the operas *Guaraní* and *Fosca*, 389 Bahians gathered in the Instituto Geographico e Historico. Of these, 316 were whites, 61 were mulattoes (predominately light), 11 were blacks, and 1 was a *cafuso*. With the governor of Bahia (white) on the platform were 12 citizens in formal dress, all whites²⁴ except the governor's bodyguard, a light mulatto in army uniform. Two young ladies in formal dress, both white, sang and declaimed. Of the 3 subsequent speakers, 2 were whites and 1 was a *branco da Bahia*. The military police band, which furnished instrumental music for the occasion, was composed of 9 blacks, 26 mulattoes, 2 whites, 3 *cafusos*, and 1 *mameluco*, under the direction of a mulatto bandmaster. Fifty students from the Instituto de Musica da Bahia sang one of Gomes' compositions. All were whites, except 2 light mulattoes.

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Twenty-one women, aged eighteen to forty, were present at a cooking school sponsored by a foreign resident. A novel experience in Bahia, where for generations Negro servants have prepared the food, this school had assumed somewhat the character of a fad. The group included several ladies from upper-class families, well to do, educated and traveled. The wife of the governor occasionally attended. Present were 18 whites and 3 light mulattoes, among the latter a *morena*, perhaps the best-dressed lady of the group. Her father is deceased, and her mother is a dressmaker in moderate circumstances. The girl's beauty, pleasant manner, and constant well-tailored appearance have secured for her admittance into the upper circles. She is often invited into the "best" homes. Another of the mixed-bloods present was

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²⁴ Including one *branco da Bahia*.

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parade, one was recently able to identify three morenos, but it should be added that, the land army, aviation, or the navy being national bodies, the officers detached to serve in the different States include only a small number of local elements.

[873] The Brazilian university students do military service by attending, for two years, courses for the preparation of reserve officers for the army. Colored students are admitted there like all the others, and, as certain of them have assured us, they are not subject to any discriminatory measures. But as few young men of Bahia intend to have a military career, the difficulties that persons of dark color may encounter in this sector are not very important. According to numerous informants, however, only the nearly white métis obtain officers' posts in the combat forces; it is easier for them to obtain posts as doctors, pharmacists, intendants, and procurator of military justice. A mulatto student relates that he aspired to enter military aviation, but that, fearing that he would not be admitted, he decided on another career. The officers' schools do not refuse the registration of dark-colored candidates, but the latter, our informants say, rarely satisfy the physical and intellectual demands required by the respective regulations, which provoked lively debates a few years ago in the national parliament.

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The military police of the State of Bahia is a traditionally popular organization, in the ranks of which no racial distinction is made; its troops have been made up of a majority of colored men. Within its primitive system of promotions a large number of mulatto and black soldiers have advanced to the ranks of officers and have succeeded in performing, under the general command of the State, duties of major importance during periods of political agitation, during periods when the government of the State had to be able to count on the loyalty of its troops. The political intrusions in the granting of these posts have greatly decreased with the changes that have been brought about in the Brazilian democratic system, but they continue nevertheless to play a certain role. From the officers' ranks of this militia have come numerous Blacks who have occupied important posts in the

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*563 police force and in politics. A school for the training of officers
708 destined for this corps was recently created, in order to improve
• 701 its capacity as a reserve for the army. Among the present students
[874] there are a few with dark skin. One may find two explanations
for this: either a preliminary selection at the time of the exami-
nations for admission, when it may happen that the young candidates
with /61/ dark skin do not, for various reasons, satisfy the re-
quired conditions, or because the career of officer now has more
[555] prestige and consequently attracts a larger number of Whites. Up
to the present time the career of military-police officer repre-
sented one of the ways of social ascent for young colored men.
Recently, under indictments of various kinds, a heavily pigmented
Black who had reached the rank of captain was expelled from the
corps. Not long ago, in a group of 27 young officers whose photo-
graphs were displayed in a commercial establishment, eight morenos
and light mulattoes and one dark mulatto could be seen. But it
is also certain that the officers corps at present, though mixed, is
composed of Whites in the majority. Moreover, in the course of
recent years the officers chosen by the general command to be
integrated in the military department of the government of the
State have almost without exception been Whites or "whitened":
an aide-de-camp of this high authority must be a representative
person, in order to make a "good impression" on individuals who
come to the government Palace or on those who are passing through
Bahia and on whom this officer must pay courtesy visits. A justi-
fication that everyone concedes.

*563 Among the officers of two local corps of civil character, but
701 having a military organization and insignia, the civil guard and
368 corps of firemen, the majority is dark. The Whites or "whitened"
are in the minority in the second of these groups. This proportion
corresponds to the lesser prestige that these two organizations en-
joy, both, however, greatly appreciated for the services that they
render to the community.